

Dental Resident Alumni Participation and Giving in University Alumni Associations

HAYLEY BOTWIN, DDS, KATIE GOSSELIN, CATHERINE PHAM, DDS, MPH, ALEXANDER ALCARAZ, DMD
OSTROW SCHOOL OF DENTISTRY OF USC | ADVANCED PEDIATRIC DENTISTRY | DEVELOPMENT OFFICE

INTRODUCTION

Alumni giving has been the subject of numerous studies, however, limited research has explored how it specifically relates to membership and engagement among dental resident graduates in university alumni associations¹. While previous research has identified variables such as family ties, involvement in university activities, and student experiences as predictors of alumni giving, their impact on membership in dental alumni associations remains underexplored especially among graduates of post-graduate certificate programs². This study seeks to examine the factors that influence alumni participation and giving behaviors among graduates of university post-graduate certificate programs in dentistry.

METHODS AND MATERIALS

This study involves dentists who have graduated from a post-graduate certificate program at the Herman Ostrow School of Dentistry of the University of Southern California (USC). Participants were invited to take part in this cross-sectional study via an online survey distributed through the REDCap platform and sent via Mailchimp. This study was approved by the USC institutional review board (IRB). The survey includes a series of questions designed to gather information on various factors that may influence alumni participation and giving behaviors.

RESULTS

Surveys were sent to just over 400 alumni. Seventy-six percent of the respondents reside in CA, specifically LA County and Orange County. The survey was completed by 22.8% of the alumni asked to participate (N=49). No respondents have children that attend USC. Just over half (52.3%) of the respondents did not earn their doctorate degree from Ostrow. About a third of the respondents did not take out loans while earning their doctorate degree or while obtaining their residency certificate. Nearly all the respondents do not have prior familial ties to Ostrow. The alumni engagement survey revealed that about half of the respondents remain actively involved in alumni activities since graduation.

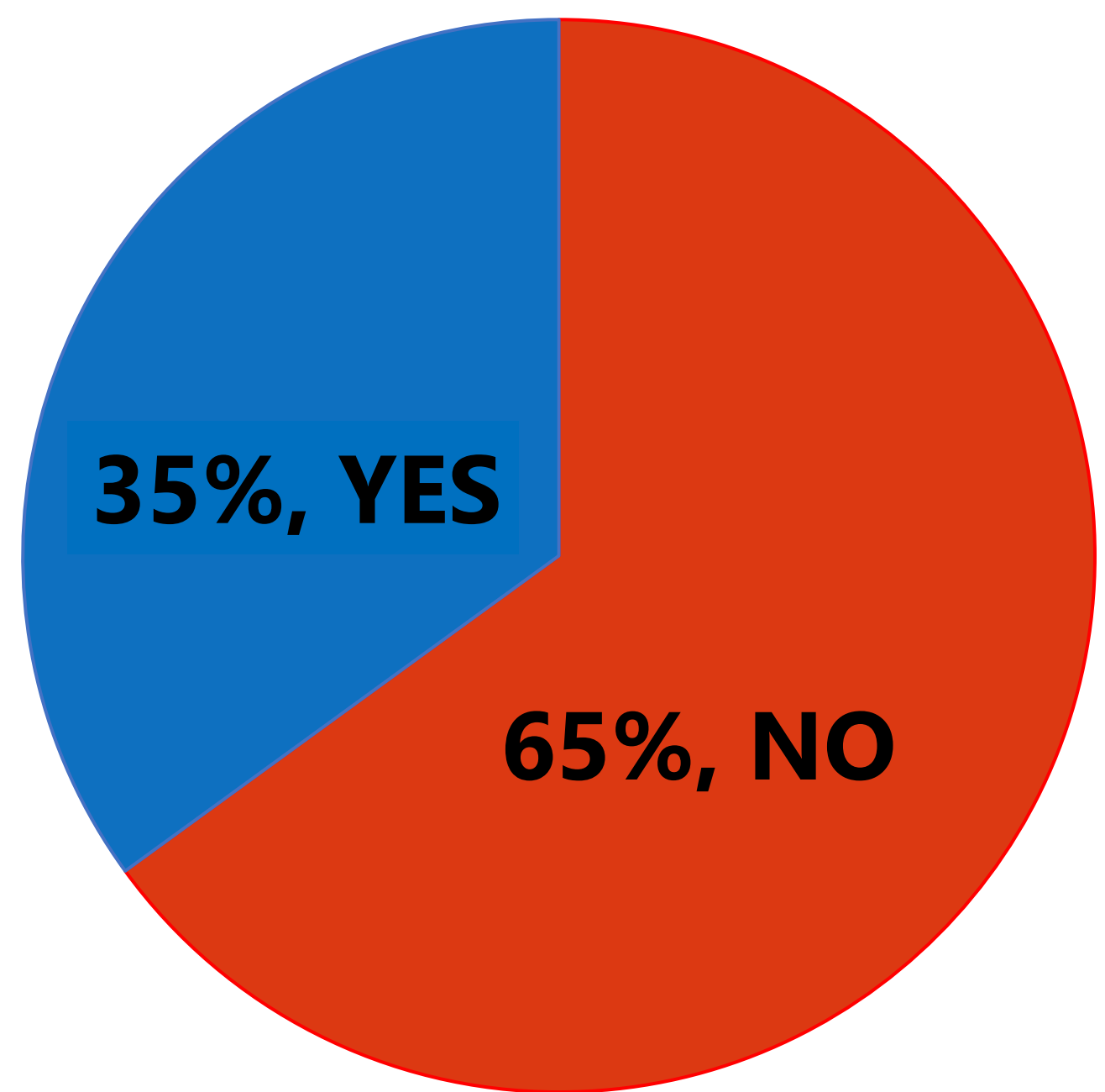


Figure 1: Percent who said a fee deters them from joining an alumni association

Advanced Operative	2
Dental Anesthesia	1
Dental Hygiene	9
Endodontics	2
General Practice (Gp)	10
OMFS	1
Orofacial Pain	2
Orthodontics	5
Pediatric Dentistry	23
Periodontics	1

Table 1: Area of dentistry practiced

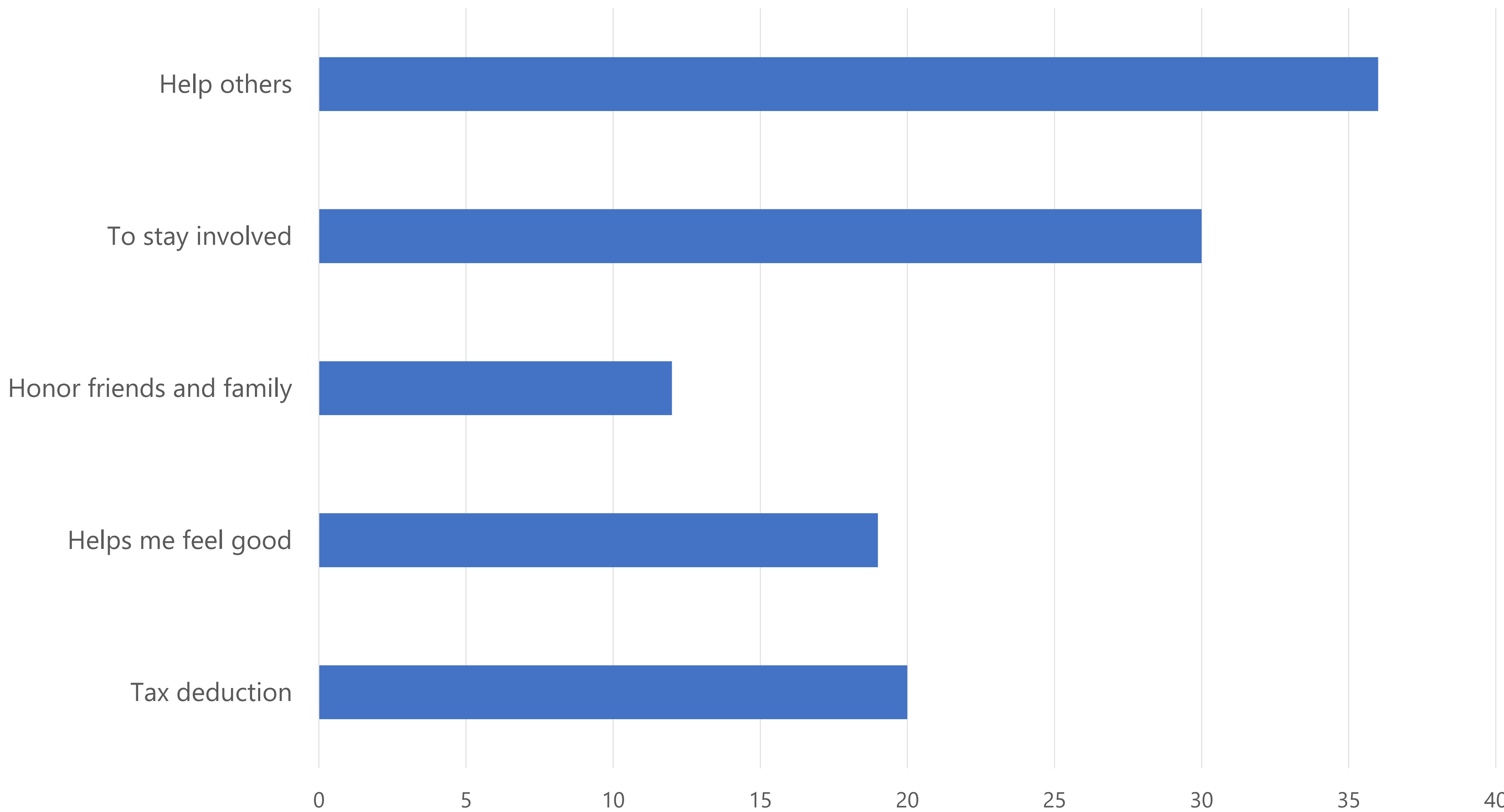


Figure 2: Reason for joining an alumni association

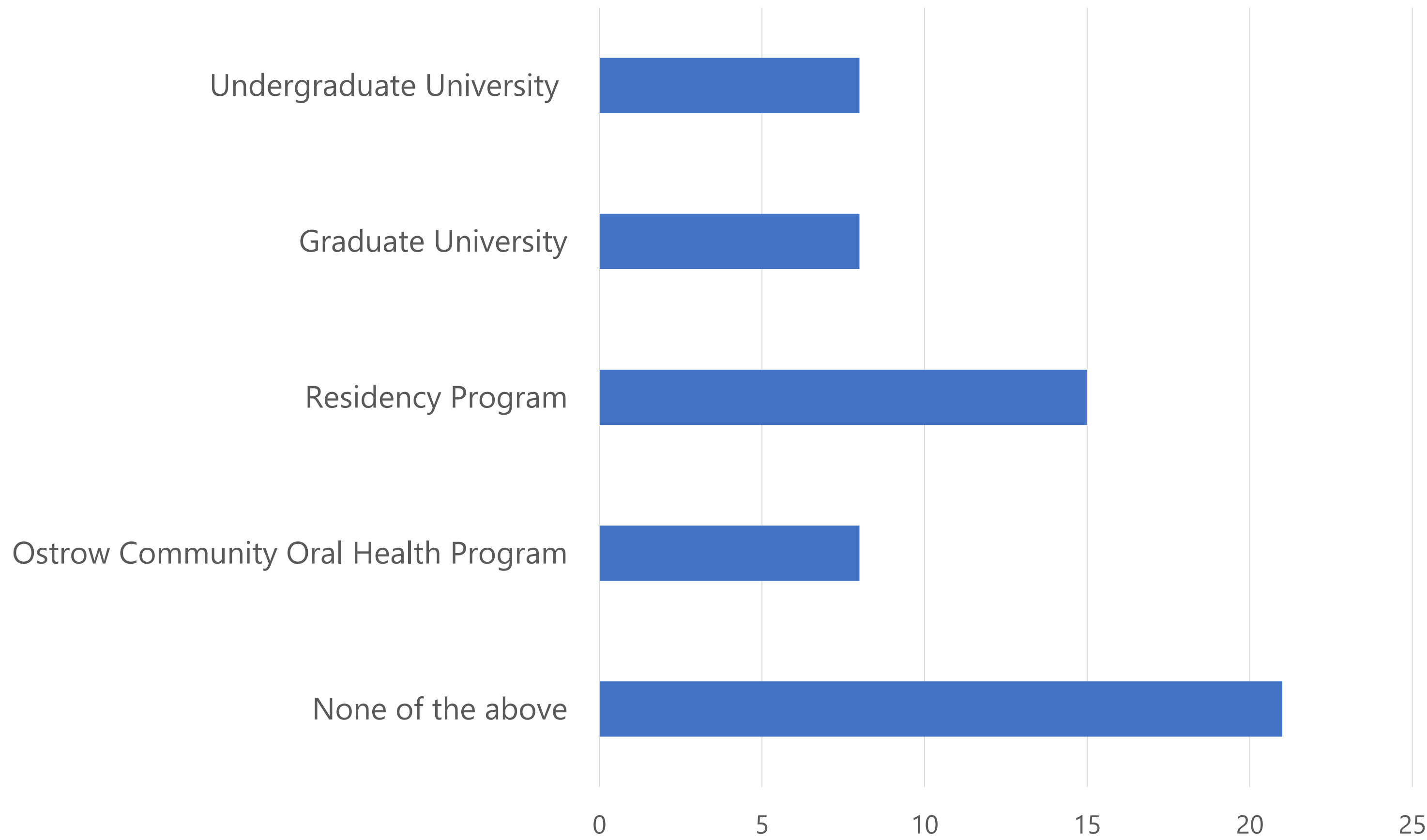


Figure 3: Areas contributed philanthropically

CONCLUSIONS

The survey respondents were nearly split 50/50 of those who remain engaged with alumni activities and those who do not, demonstrating a foundation of interest and involvement. However, less than a quarter are part of Ostrow Connect, highlighting a need for greater awareness and targeted outreach efforts. Many respondents expressed interest in receiving updates, presenting a key opportunity to enhance communication strategies. Strengthening communication efforts could lead to increased alumni participation, deeper connections with the institution, and greater philanthropic contributions in the future. Respondents would like to contribute their time, talents, and resources by serving as mentors to current students.

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2. Newman, M. D., & Petrosko, J. M. (2011). Predictors of Alumni Association Membership. Research in Higher Education, 52(7), 738-759.